

## **Speech to Guildford council 21-2-2024. - Local Plan Update**

Good Evening.

The Society has reviewed the webinar of the Executive Meeting on this subject 25th/Jan, and the supporting papers. It supports the Council initiating a Local Plan Update.

National Planning policy is in turmoil as an example possibly three significant updates to the NPPF over 18months. A Guildford Local Plan needs to be robustly developed to cope with this churn.

A detailed plan and budget for the update is due to be prepared for approval. The following should be included in the plans.

Firstly Evidence Base. At the Executive meeting Councillor White was very clear to say the Evidence Base needed to be fully updated.

We Agree.

The Evidence base must also include initiatives such as the Economic Strategy, and the outputs from the Shaping Guildford's Future programme developed at the cost of circa £2.5M.

Secondly Infrastructure – The revised Local Plan must lock in required Infrastructure improvements, especially if we have to handle an increase in housing numbers. Mr Jonathan Bore, the inspector of the current plan, questioned robustly the delivery of improvements in supporting infrastructure – his concerns have been well founded. Major developments in a updated plan should be declared non-deliverable unless supporting infrastructure is delivered e.g. Flood remediation. We also note the implementation of CIL is still awaited in the borough.

Thirdly Timescale - The Local Plan update is likely to take circa 3 plus years, Cllr White's expressed caution on achieving a 30 month timescale, proposed by central government.

We cannot wait for 3 years - alongside the Local Plan update the council must be prepared to draft and add extra policies on matters such as Heights, a major concern to the Society, and potentially for selected sites/areas to guide development. A policy in draft carries weight in the planning process.

Cllr Potter commented at the Executive that the update should be viewed as an opportunity to address issues including Town Centre Riverside, Brownfield sites, Affordability etc.

We Agree

The Society would add several more to this list including Design Quality and Standards (why can't we have schemes of the quality consented in Lewes last week?), Transport. Pollution, and the Environment.

Guildford Deserves Better – we need a robust local plan that properly, as the NPPF states, details our development needs, aligns growth and infrastructure; improves the environment; and responds to global warming.